

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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FOR AMBASSADOR FROM NEA/INS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, CE

SUBJECT: DECLASSIFICATION OF HISTORIC DOCUMENTS

1. WE ARE NOW REVIEWING DEPARTMENT DOCUMENTS FOR PUBLICA-
TION IN FOREIGN RELATIONS OF U.S. SERIES (FRUS). PERIOD
COVERED IS 1952-54. MOST DOCUMENTS CONCERN RUBBER DISPUTE
-- U.S. NEGOTIATIONS TO SELL RICE TO CEYLON AND BUY CEYLO-
NESE RUBBER IN ORDER TO END RUBBER SHIPMENTS TO CHINA;
FIRST RUBBER-RICE BARTER AGREEMENT WITH PRC; AND U.S. EM-
BARGO OF SULFUR TO CEYLON AND EFFORTS TO KEEP OTHER NATIONS
FROM SELLING SULFUR TO CEYLON'S RUBBER PLANTATIONS. WE FOR-
SEE NO PROBLEM WITH RELEASE OF ANY OF THESE DOCUMENTS.

2. ALSO TOUCHED ON ARE CEYLONESE PUBLIC REACTION TO U.S.
AIRLIFT OF FRENCH PARATROOPERS TO DIEN BIEN PHU (AIRLIFT
STOPPED IN COLOMBO FOR RE-FUELING) AND DISCUSSION POSSI-
BILITY OF CEYLON JOINING SEATO (THIS WAS RESULT OF DEPART-
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MENT INQUIRY TO SEVERAL POSTS IN AREA).

3. TOPIC ON WHICH WE REQUEST YOUR THOUGHTS CONCERNS U.S.
DESIRE TO ESTABLISH MILITARY FACILITIES IN CEYLON. THIS
SUBJECT HAS BEEN RAISED IN PREVIOUS FRUS EDITIONS. 1949
VOLUME ON NATIONAL DEFENSE DESCRIBES URGENT NEED FOR
USAF/USN COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES IN CEYLON AND REQUIRE-

MENT FOR STOCKPILING FUEL AND AMMUNITION AT TRINCOMALEE. 1951 FRUS VOLUME ON ASIA DESCRIBES DISCUSSIONS ON OPERATING RIGHTS FOR DOD COMMUNICATIONS. 1951 VOLUME ALSO CONTAINS DECEMBER 1951 MEMO FROM ACTING DOD SECRETARY TO DULLES STATING THAT "AN INFORMAL PROPOSAL HAS BEEN MADE BY OFFICIALS OF THE CEYLON GOVERNMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES ESTABLISH AND OPERATE IN CEYLON: A) ONE OR TWO BOMBER SQUADRONS WITH SUPPORTING FIGHTER CRAFT; B) A SMALL FLEET OF COASTAL CRAFT POSSIBLY INCLUDING SUBMARINES; C) ISLAND-WIDE RADAR COVERAGE. "MEMO CONCLUDES THAT DOD HAS "A MILITARY INTEREST FOR CERTAIN BASES AND FACILITIES IN CEYLON IN THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE, THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF WHICH CANNOT AT THIS TIME BE DETERMINED."

4. MATERIALS NOW BEFORE US FOR DECLASSIFICATION/PUBLICATION CONCERN INTERNAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN DOD, STATE, AND EMBASSY BETWEEN 1952-54 WHETHER TIME WAS RIPE TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOC FOR ESTABLISHMENT MILITARY COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AND HEAVY BOMBER BASE IN CEYLON. IN EVERY CASE, EMBASSY/STATE REPLIED THAT TIME WAS NOT PROPITIOUS TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS WITH GOC AND GOC WAS UNLIKELY TO ALLOW US MILITARY IN AND INCUR WRATH OF CEYLON PRESS/LEFTIST PARTIES AND INDIA UNLESS "SUBSTANTIAL" QUID PRO QUO WAS OFFERED. EVENTUALLY DOD LOST INTEREST IN CEYLON AS POSSIBLE SITE.

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5. -EUSG AND

5. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT LEFTIST PARTIES HAVE FOR YEARS ACCUSED U.S. OF HAVING MILITARY DESIGNS IN SRI LANKA AND INDIAN OCEAN AREA AND ALLEGED THAT PAST UNP GOVERNMENTS WERE ATTEMPTING TO "SELL OUT" COUNTRY TO AMERICANS. CONSIDERING FACT UNP NOW IN POWER AND CONTINUED SENSITIVITY OF U.S. PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN, WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR JUDGMENT WHETHER "THE CONTINUING PROTECTION OF THESE DOCUMENTS IS ESSENTIAL TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY" AND/OR "IS IN THE INTEREST OF NATIONAL DEFENSE OR FOREIGN POLICY." VANCE

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